



**COMMANDER, NAVY REGION HAWAII &
NAVAL SURFACE GROUP
MIDDLE PACIFIC**
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
850 TICONDEROGA STREET, SUITE 110
JBPHH, HAWAII 96860
PHONE: 808-473-2888 FAX: 808-473-2876
www.cnic.navy.mil/hawaii



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Philippine Navy Visits Pearl Harbor

(PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM) – The Philippine Navy’s newest ship, BRP Gregorio del Pilar (PF-15), is scheduled to arrive at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on July 27, 2011, at 7:30 a.m. for a brief port visit. Deputy Consul General Paul Cortes, of the Philippine Consulate in Honolulu; Capt. Jeffrey James, commander of Joint Base-Pearl Harbor-Hickam; and Capt. William Johnson, commanding officer of USS Lake Erie (CG 70), will greet the ship. Members of the Filipino community who have base access are welcome to attend the arrival.

During the port visit, Gregorio del Pilar will take on supplies and fuel, hold a reception hosted by the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu and the Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawaii (PCCCH), and visit the USS Arizona Memorial. A social media “Tweet Up” is being planned during the ship’s visit. A Catholic Mass will be conducted prior to their departure.

Commanded by Capt. Alberto A. Cruz, Gregorio Del Pilar left Alameda, Calif. on July 18 and is making its maiden voyage to the Republic of the Philippines where it will join the Philippine Fleet. BRP Gregorio Del Pilar is a former U.S. Coast Guard cutter. As a multi-mission surface combatant ship, BRP Gregorio Del Pilar becomes the first gas-turbine jet engine-powered vessel in the Philippine Navy fleet.

Prior to taking command of the ship, 74 members underwent intensive hands-on training on board the USCGC Boutwell, the sister ship of the USCGC Hamilton, for two months, traveling to Colombia, Ecuador and El Salvador, during which time the ship’s mission included the interdiction of drug smugglers. The success of the training and transition is an indication of the robust Philippine-U.S. partnership and serves as an expression of U.S. commitment to help the Philippines protect its maritime domain.

News media who are interested in covering the ship’s arrival should contact MC2 Stirrup at the Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office at 808-590-8363 by 4 p.m. July 26 to arrange an escort onto Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Media will be met at the Nimitz Gate Visitors Pass Office parking area on July 27 at 7 a.m.

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